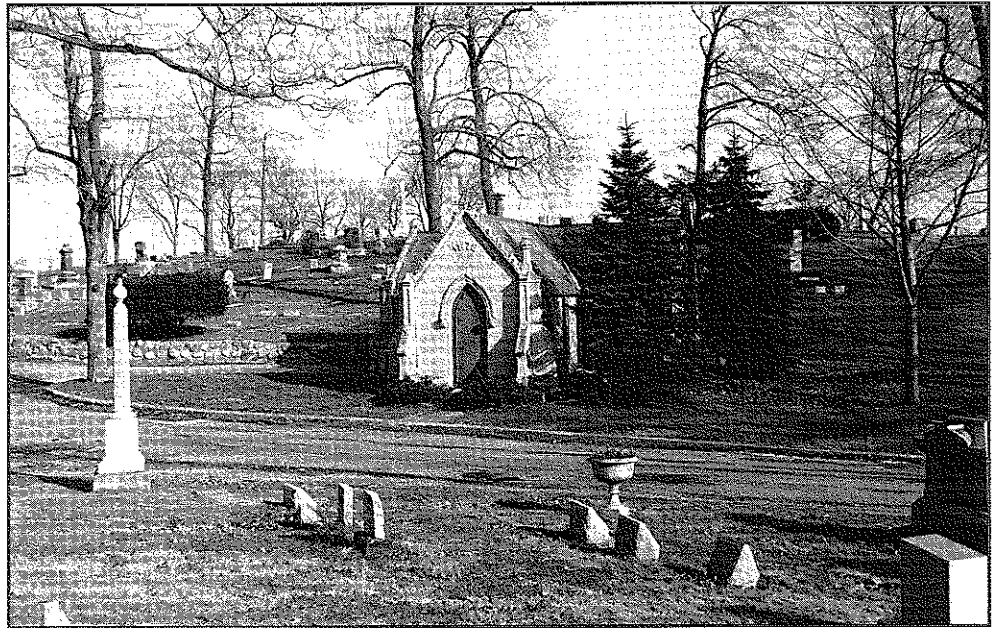


Chapter Five

SURVEYING LANDSCAPES, INCLUDING FARMS



Mountain Home Cemetery, Kalamazoo

Urban, suburban, and rural survey areas may contain properties and areas that possess significance as **Historic Landscapes**. A landscape is a collection of organized features that can range from something as small as a birdbath to large fields or orchards. The U.S. secretary of the interior has defined the following six components of a landscape that must be identified and documented if the character of the landscape property is to be understood: spatial organization and land patterns; topography; vegetation; circulation; water features; and structures, site furnishings, and objects. The degree of importance of any of these features depends on the landscape and its use.

The types of historic landscapes that surveyors are most likely to encounter are **Historic Designed Landscapes** and **Rural Historic Landscapes**. Before beginning work, surveyors should review *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*; National Register Bulletin 18, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*; and National Register Bulletin 30, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, for insights into identifying and documenting these important historic resources. These publications are available from the SHPO.

A **Historic Designed Landscape** is defined in Bulletin 18 as a landscape:

- Significant as a design or work of art;
- Consciously designed and laid out either by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, or horticulturalist to a design principle, or by an owner or other amateur according to a recognized style or tradition; or
- That has a historical association with a significant person, trend, or movement in landscape gardening or architecture, or a significant relationship to the theory or practice of landscape architecture.

Historic designed landscapes may include parks, squares and other public spaces, cemeteries, parkway or boulevard systems, small residential grounds,

estates, campus and institutional grounds, gardens, golf courses, and planned subdivisions and communities, including mobile-home parks/manufactured housing developments.

A **Rural Historic Landscape** is defined in Bulletin 30 as

“a geographic area that historically has been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features. Rural landscapes commonly reflect the day-to-day occupational activities of people engaged in traditional work activities such as mining, fishing, and various types of agriculture. Often, they have developed and evolved in response to both the forces of nature and the pragmatic need to make a living.”

Rural historic landscapes typically contain large acreage and proportionally small numbers of buildings and structures compared to other types of historic properties.

Examples of rural historic landscapes that might be found in Michigan include:

- An agricultural district containing a group of farms whose well preserved buildings and structures and patterns of land use reflect a particular time frame and type(s) of agriculture or reflect a particular ethnic heritage;
- An industrial district comprised of a series of mine complexes or remnants standing in a row along an outcrop of mineral or a company town site comprised of remnants of the town and industrial and related development;
- A fishing village or complex or group of complexes; or
- A district of recreational camps loosely clustered along a river or around the shores of a bay or lake.

- If the historic landscape forms a single complex property, such as a park, a cemetery, residential grounds, or an estate, prepare a Ruskin record for the landscape property as a whole. Also prepare a Ruskin record for each individual feature in the landscape. Any feature that appears several times, such as a fence or wall system, unusual or decorative lighting, signage, bench, planter, or pavement material, should be recorded in a single Ruskin record. For cemeteries, records should be created for all public monuments and memorials, such as veterans' memorials. Private monuments and memorials should be surveyed when they mark the resting places of historically significant people, when they possess special artistic merit or are unique in design, or when they are rare examples of a type, such as the iron cross markers occasionally seen in old Catholic cemeteries.
- If the historic landscape contains a number of complex properties within it, it will be necessary to prepare a separate Ruskin record for the entire historic landscape, which should be treated as a district. Examples: a Designed Historic Landscape that is a planned residential district in which each individual property contains historic features that require survey; a Rural Historic District that is a rural agricultural district consisting of a group of farms, each of which contains historic features that require survey. For each complex property within a larger historic landscape — such as a park in a residential neighborhood — that forms a district, prepare a Ruskin record for the complex property as a whole and a Ruskin record for each feature within the complex property.
- Prepare Ruskin records for historic vegetative features such as tree lines, groves of trees, or garden beds, and for natural features such as ponds or boulders when they are parts of designed historic landscapes or when historical information on the origins and uses of the features is available. Examples for designed landscapes might include a ring of mature trees marking the street edges of a public square, a single specimen tree planted as part of a landscaping plan, a grove of trees in a park left in place when the park was created to serve as a decorative element or picnic spot, and hedges which frame pedestrian pathways. Examples that should be surveyed of vegetative

features associated with historic landscapes that are not “designed” might include mature trees planted in the front yard of a house when the circumstances of planting are known (for example, to commemorate the births of children, a marriage, or the national centennial), a tree line planted as a windbreak, and a garden plot when information is available about what was grown there, when, and by whom. Ruskin records should otherwise not be made for vegetative or other features that occur naturally in the landscape even though these features may be important to an understanding of the physical character of the complex property and district. Instead, these features should be depicted on the survey maps and described in the Description or Other Buildings/Features fields in the record for the complex property with which they are associated.

The **Description Field** for the Ruskin record created for the landscape as a whole should provide an overview description of the entire historic landscape which provides basic information on the following as appropriate:

For a Designed Historic Landscape:

- Overall form and plan of the landscape.
- Approximate size of landscape: Convey the scale of the landscape in terms of acres or square miles, as appropriate.
- Topography: Describe whether the land is flat, rolling, hilly, or varied in relief.
- Natural features: Describe natural features, such as rivers, lakes, hills, or bluffs, that help define the landscape.
- Circulation system of roads, paths, trails, etc.
- Spatial relationships and orientations, such as symmetry, asymmetry, and axial alignment.
- Views and vistas into and out of the landscape.
- Vegetation: Ideally, describe the vegetation present by botanical name and common name with caliper for trees and heights for shrubs (and put this information onto maps). At the least, describe the primary types and locations of vegetation. Mention the extent of tree cover, using appropriate terms such as *grove*, *scattered trees*, *forest*, *wooded area*, and *specimen tree*. If possible, name the species of trees or describe whether trees are coniferous (“evergreen”) or deciduous. Include

the general maturity of the trees (for example, “a grove of mature red pine trees”). Use a similar approach to describing shrubs and their arrangement on the landscape. Flowers and other low-growing plants should be described in terms of their placement in the landscape: in beds, naturalistic plantings, planters, or specialty gardens (such as herb gardens).

- Bodies of water such as pools, fountains, lakes, streams, and cascades.
- Number and general character and location of buildings, structures, and objects present.

For a Rural Historic Landscape, provide an overview description in terms of the overall form and size of the area and in terms of the eleven landscape characteristics defined in National Register Bulletin 30, pages 15-18. These landscape characteristics are:

- Land Uses and Activities
- Patterns of Spatial Organization
- Response to the Natural Environment
- Cultural Traditions
- Circulation Networks
- Boundary Demarcations
- Vegetation Related to Land Use
- Buildings, Structures, and Objects
- Clusters
- Archaeological Sites
- Small-scale Elements

The **Statement of History and Significance** field should provide a summary narrative history of the landscape and define its significance in terms of its design, historic use, etc.

Photographs

Photo-image instructions and requirements for images to accompany Ruskin records for individual resources and for complex properties (including landscapes such as parks, cemeteries, and farms) are provided in the general **PHOTOGRAPHING PROPERTIES** instructions in Chapter 3.

For an overall landscape, more than one photo-image almost always is needed to convey the character of the landscape. General views, as well as close-up views of significant landscape features (ones that were not individually surveyed), should be included. The number of views that should be taken to accompany the record for the landscape as a whole should relate to the size and complexity of the landscape, with fifteen views being the maximum for all but very large landscapes such as districts.

Mapping

The survey map(s) for the landscape should be prepared in accordance with the general survey mapping instructions in Chapter 7. If complex properties are contained within the landscape, they will have their own survey maps; thus the survey map for the landscape as a whole should only identify the properties and reference the individual site maps in the appropriate locations. All other surveyed resources should be plotted and labelled on the landscape's survey map. The survey map(s) should also illustrate those important characteristics and features that were not surveyed but were described in the Description section of the landscape's Ruskin property record.

FARM PROPERTIES

Farm properties commonly consist of farmstead areas containing any houses and the barns and other outbuildings *plus* the remainders of the farm properties, which may include a combination of features such as crop and pasture areas, woodlots, orchards and gardens, lanes, windbreaks, and ponds. Additional buildings such as hay barns and migrant housing clusters may stand outside of the main farmstead area. Small-scale features such as fencing, windmills, wells, and bridges may also be present. These human-built and natural elements plus the overall features of land-use and circulation patterns all define the character of farm properties.

A survey of farm properties should provide information on each entire property, including a comparison of the current and historic patterns of land use and the physical layout as far as it can be determined. It should provide information on all buildings, structures, and other component features. The list of property types associated with agriculture (see the Ruskin pick list in Appendix B) will be useful as a guide to the kinds of features that should be inventoried in order to thoroughly document the farm property and evaluate its historic significance.

How to Survey Farms

- Prepare a property record for the farm as a whole.
- Prepare a Ruskin property record for each building, structure, or object, regardless of age, within the entire farm property. A single record should be completed to cover all examples of any features that appear several times in the landscape, such as fencing or wall systems.
- Property records *should* be made for historic vegetation features associated with human occupation and use — such as windbreaks, tree lines along roads or drives, specimen trees, garden beds, and sugarbushes — when historic information on the origins and uses of these features can be obtained. Ruskin property records *should not* be made for such features when there is no historic documentation; instead, these features should be briefly described in the Description section of the property record for the entire farm.
- Ruskin property records *should* be made for surviving historic areas of land usage such as crop land, orchard remnants, or woodlots and for natural features such as ponds that are important to an understanding of the physical and historic character of the farm. They also *should* be briefly described in the Description section of the farm's Ruskin record.

Ruskin Property Record for the Entire Farmstead

The **Description** field for the farm as a whole should provide an overview description that will serve as an introduction to the descriptive information on the property records for individual features on the farm and provide pertinent information on those other important features that were not individually surveyed.

The **Statement of History and Significance** field should provide a summary narrative history of the farm and define any historic significance. Historical research should attempt to document:

- When the farm was settled;

- Biographical information on families that have owned or farmed the land;
- When existing improvements were made and known builders and suppliers involved;
- What the farm produced at various eras in its history and the quantities or values, if agricultural census data or other records are available; and
- The physical evolution of the farm — its buildings and structures and land usage — over the years.

The **Sources of Information** section of the **Property Specific Research** instructions in Chapter 4, **Historical Research**, lists archival sources of information that may be useful in developing a history of the specific farm and for attempting to place it in its historic context over the years.

Photographs

General photo-image instructions and requirements for images to accompany Ruskin records for individual resources and for complex properties, including farms, are provided in Chapter 3. For a farm, more than one photo-image almost always is needed to convey the character of the farm buildings and property. The number of general views needed will generally range from 2 to 4, with a greater number possibly needed for the most complex farms. The views should be taken from different directions and include one or more that illustrate the street frontage.

Mapping

A single survey map should be prepared for each surveyed farm in accordance with the general survey mapping instructions. The map should include the entire property, not just the area containing the buildings. All surveyed resources should be plotted and labelled. The survey map for a farm should also illustrate those important features that were not surveyed but were described in the Description section of the Ruskin record for the entire farm.